

Waray Dynasty: How Veloso-Loreto-Cari-Petilla ruled Leyte for nearly 100 years



If political opinion makers in Metro Manila still think that Leyte is Romualdez country, think again.

The Veloso-Loreto-Cari-Petilla political clan started its dynasty in the American colonial period – way before any Romualdez got elected or was appointed to a government post of national significance.

So far, so good. Their clan is roughly approaching a century in power with only a few interruptions, one being World War II.

This enduring dynaasty firmly holds the provincial capitol, the fifth legislative district, their hometown bailiwick Baybay City, the populous town of Palo. It even has two members in the Cabinet of President Benigno Aquino III.

Leyte's most dominant political clan started with a Veloso

The first member of this elongated political clan in public office was Jose Ma. Veloso who became Leyte first district representative for three terms (1922-1925; 1935-

1938; 1941-1946) and senator for two terms (1916-1919 and 1925-1935) in the Commonwealth period.

Juan Veloso also became representative of Leyte's first district from 1925 to 1928.

It should be noted at this point that the Romualdez political dynasty started only in 1949 when Daniel Z. Romualdez was elected Leyte fourth district representative. He also became Speaker of the House of Representatives in 1957 to 1962. The Tacloban City airport was named after him.

The second generation Velosos saw first degree cousins Marcelino Veloso and Alberto Veloso become representatives of the first (1957-1972) and third districts (1978-1986) respectively.

The Loreto Branch

Another set of first degree cousins comprised the Loreto branch of this Leyte political dynasty.

Jose Ma. and Juan Veloso had a sister, Maria Veloso who married Carlos Loreto. This marriage produced the Loreto branch politicians that have squiggled their way up the politicized bureaucracy for much of the last 25 years.

The children of Carlos Loreto and Maria Veloso are highly successful politicians.

Eriberto "Berting" V. Loreto became representative of Leyte's fifth district (1987-1998). He was derisively classified as part of the Lower House's Silent Majority in his last term. He died in 2005.

Jose "Ete" V. Loreto, former Baybay town mayor (1980-1986) and provincial board member has since been out of the political limelight since 1995.

Carmen V. Loreto Cari, 84, the current matriarch of the Loreto-Cari political clan and incumbent city mayor of Baybay in the fifth congressional district of Leyte.

She was elected Baybay town mayor in 1988 until 1998. From 2001 until 2010, she represented Leyte's fifth district. It was during this period that she worked for the town's cityhood. In 2010, she was elected city mayor of Baybay.



The *palangga* and *bunso* is Remedios "Matin" V. Loreto-Petilla, 79, the incumbent mayor of Palo, Leyte. Remedios herself made her own political influence in Leyte after succeeding her husband, Leopoldo, as governor (1995-2004). She became Leyte first district representative in 2004-2007.

The late Berting, Ete, Carmen and Matin are still part of the second generation of the Veloso-Loreto political dynasty.

Let us now have a look-see at the third generation that stretches further the Veloso-Loreto-Cari and Veloso-Loreto-Petilla sub-branches of one of the Philippines' most powerful politiko clans.

Loreto-Cari sub-branch

After the Berting Loreto served out his third term as congressman, his daughter Ma. Catalina Loreto-Go stepped up to serve a term as Leyte fifth district representative in 1998-2001.

But her aunt, Carmen after serving three terms as Baybay mayor shoved Go's second term aspirations aside as she took the district representation from 2001 to 2010.

This widened and deepened the Loreto-Cari sub-branch scope – of Carmen's familia – in both fifth district and Baybay City politics.



Currently in office are her two sons: Rep. Jose Carlos “Boying” Loreto Cari and Baybay City vice mayor Michael Loreto Cari, and her daughter-in-law, Ma. Margarita C. Cari, currently the ABC President of Baybay City and ex-officio member of the Leyte provincial board representing the Association of Barangay Captains. Margarita is the wife of Boying.

Boying replaced his mother as mayor in 1998 until 2007 before becoming congressman. Michael became the clan’s first city mayor when Baybay finally became a city in 2007 (thanks to a flip-floppy Supreme Court decision on the 16 cities converted via legislation). He also served as ABC president of Baybay from 1996 to 2004.

One noteworthy add-on is Mayor Carmen Cari’s husband Felipe, who hails from Batanes. He is said to be close to the most powerful member of the Aquino Cabinet, Budget Secretary Butch Abad.

Loreto-Petilla sub-branch

The matriarch of the Loreto-Petilla sub-branch is Palo town mayor Remedios “Matin” V. Loreto-Petilla. Matin was also a three-term governor (1998-2004) of Leyte and one-term first district representative (2004-2007).



The Petilla's rise to power in Leyte started with Leopoldo "Polding" Petilla – Matin's husband – who was three-term governor before he was succeeded by his wife.



Their son Carlos Jericho "Icot" Loreto-Petilla, was Leyte governor (2004-2012) before he was appointed as Energy Secretary by Pres. Benigno Aquino III.

Another son, Leopoldo Dominico "Mic" Petilla is now the governor after running unopposed in 2013.

Ete Loreto's kids are not left out

The children of former Board Member Ete Loreto are also in the loop.



His son Carlo Petilla Loreto is Leyte vice governor after having been board member for three terms.

His daughter is the second clan member in the Aquino Cabinet: former Iloilo 1st district representative and now Health Secretary Janette P. Loreto-Garin. Loreto-Garin was also once a member of the Leyte provincial board before moving to her husband's turf in Iloilo.



Manang Carmen, Manoy Ete and Matin are mighty proud of their stranglehold in Leyte politics. It's been 93 years since the first member of their clan got into office.

Sadly, the Romualdez, Apostol, Salvacion, Codilla, Torres (-Gomez) and other political clans can only watch in the fringes for now.

This is one helluva dynasty that should be studied by academics, lawmakers and pollsters who are pushing for an enabling law against dynasties in the Philippines.

ref.: <http://politics.com.ph/waray-dynasty-how-veloso-loreto-cari-petilla-ruled-leyte-for-nearly-100-years/>

Look also www.political-system.aboutphilippines.ph